University of Michigan
Big Heads highlights report, January 2006
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1. Programmatic review

In late 2004, the University Library undertook a system-wide review of current work with an eye to identifying areas that could yield efficiencies that would, in turn, free up resources to attend to emerging areas of work. One of the key areas that we identified was the flow of work extending from the process of selecting materials for acquisition through the process of cataloging those items. A multi-stage effort dubbed the Selection, Acquisitions and Cataloging (SAC) review began in the Spring of 2005. A committee with broad representation in the library began a six-month process to document workflows and identify issues; their work culminated in early December with a thorough report. Although their work is contributing to a final process that will look at the most efficient way to organize our resources system-wide, the work of the group helped to highlight issues that have been addressed concurrently with the review. Other steps in this process include an examination of cataloging practices (e.g., are we investing in the best elements in our cataloging?) and site visits to other institutions, followed by analysis of these various inputs. We may conclude that work in the Spring of 2006.

2. Exploratory work with non-MARC metadata

The library's Metadata Specialist has created an exploratory operation with hourly staffing for creating non-MARC metadata. Currently, this consists of a number of projects such as creating article-level metadata for locally-digitized journals and specialized descriptive metadata for maps within atlases. She is focusing, secondarily (i.e., in addition to actually doing this work), on gathering cost data for future library work and possible recharge work for other campus units.

3. Work with Z39.50 search for records

Staff in Monograph Cataloging and Library Systems have worked together to create mechanisms and procedures for using automated Z39.50 routines from within Aleph to troll for fuller records to replace existing brief records, such as acquisitions records.

4. ARC implementation

A library-wide implementation team (chaired by the head of Acquisitions and Serials) has completed work on a release of ARC, Ex Libris's Aleph Reporting Center. Although the group unearth a number of bugs in the software, we are pleased with the product and have released it to a smaller group of staff, with a broader release planned later.

5. Verde implementation

We have acquired Verde (from Ex Libris) for electronic resource management. Although a Beta site, we have encountered a number of obstacles in getting the

software installed. A working group has performed work around the planned implementation.

6. Move to single record for print and electronic
The University of Michigan library held a library-wide forum to review its previous policy regarding cataloging of electronic resources. In light of experience over the last few years and the prospect of having all volumes in the library digitized, we decided to create a combined print and electronic record rather than separate records for print and electronic. This new policy has helped to shape our work in creating a repository for the Google-created content. Discussions between monograph catalogers, serials catalogers, and the UM library's Systems Office have helped to shape an overwhelmingly automated procedure for bringing relevant information into the MARC record and displaying that information appropriately.

7. New committee structure and MDRC
We have just finished the first year with a new coordinated committee structure for deploying and managing electronic resources. Led by a steering committee comprised of the chairs of the three main committees and an independent chair, the three main committees are PARC (for public access issues), MDRC (for metadata and description issues) and LTC (for technology management issues).   MDRC has been active coordinating policy and implementation issues for metadata.

8. Cooperative position with Systems
Working with Library Systems Office, the Monograph Cataloging Division released an open cataloging position to create a new programmer position whose work will be focused on automation of cataloging processes.